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ABSTRACT

Effects of response mode, response format, perceived response style, sex, and anonymity on raw scale scores and extreme response tendencies for two distinct measures of affective behavior were investigated. The two measures were a self-acceptance scale developed by J.R. Phillips and the Machiavellianism IV scale. Where (response mode) and how (response format) the respondents were to report their responses were manipulated in seven different response forms. Two hundred twelve college age and adult subjects participated in the investigation. Findings indicated statistically significant effects for response mode, format and style. Results suggest that the effects of response form are a function of both subject and instrument characteristics. (Author/MV)

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The Effects of Response Mode and Format on Responses to Affective Measures

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ABSTRACT

Investigated were the effects of response mode, response format, perceived response style, sex, and anonymity on raw scale scores and extreme response tendencies for two distinct measures of affective behavior. Where (response mode) and how (response format) the respondents were to report their responses were manipulated in seven different response forms. Two hundred twelve (212) college age and adult subjects participated in the investigation. Findings of the ANOVA analyses indicated statistically significant effects for response mode, format and style. The results suggest that the effects of response form are a function of both subject and instrument characteristics.

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The Effects of Response Mode and Format

on Responses to Affective Measures

Answer sheets, response modes and response formats have received the attention of measurement specialists. Technological developments during the late 1930's, resulting in the availability of optical scanning equipment, signalled the beginning of research into the effects of the separate answer sheet on student responses (Traxler, 1951). While the research literature is by no means voluminous, what has been reported is consistent. Research by Herkelmann (1938), Loper (1939) and Dunlap (1940) examining the effects and efficiency of separate answer sheets versus responding in the test booklet found no differences in terms of test means, variances, reliability and validity. Recent research, having accepted the conclusion of no systematic effect due to the response mode, has investigated this issue in terms of the grade level at which the respondent can effectively make use of the separate answer sheet (Hieronymus, 1961; McKee, 1967; Cashen & Ramseyer, 1969; Ramseyer & Cashen, 1971). Results of these studies have shown that use of the machine-scored separate answer sheet after training becomes an efficient device for students beginning in the fourth grade.

While the overall conclusion has been that the response mode does not affect test scores or test performance, one area has been overlooked. The research that has been conducted has exclusively examined the question using cognitive measures, yet the use of separate answer sheets with affective self-report devices is just as common and as frequent. Indeed there is a long, well documented history of the susceptibility of measures in the affective area to produce distortions in respondents scores as a function of response sets and response tendencies (Cronback, 1946; Jackson & Messick, 1967; Nunnally, 1967). As such, the question of the effects of the separate answer sheet on responses to affective measures deserves attention.

Of concern to affective measurement is the response format that can be used. Regardless of where the respondent provides his/her answers (i.e., in-booklet or out-of-booklet), the response format, that is how alternatives are arranged on the scale (e.g., vertically, horizontally, etc.) has been shown to affect test parameters. Studies by Mathews (1920, 1927, 1930) and Huck and Jacko (1973) found that as the position and format of response alternatives were varied so did respondent scale scores and the test's reliability.

Given this state of affairs and the existing level of knowledge, the present study was designed as an exploratory investigation to examine the effects of different responding arrangement on subjects' responses. Commonly used in- and out-of-booklet formats were studied. The research question was further examined in consideration of the respondent's sex, whether they were responding anonymously or not and a characterization by respondents of their perceived response style to forced-choiced items.

Method

Based on the research of Getzels and Walsh (1958) who found uniquely differing response patterns when affective items were presented in a first-person or a third-person mode, it was decided to investigate the question of response mode and format using using two distinct scales. The scales were selected so that one presented items in a first-person manner and the other, third-person. One device, a measure of self-acceptance developed by Phillips (1951) contains 18 items responded to on a 4-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The internal consistency of this measure has been reported to exceed .91, while coefficients of stability have been found to be .84. The instrument is characterized by items that are all stated in the first person singular. For example: I find that I feel the need to make excuses or apologize for my behavior. Higher scores

on this scale indicate a greater degree of self-acceptance.

The second instrument selected was the Machiavellianism scale (MACH IV) devised by Christie et al. (1969). The 18 items on this scale are responded to on a 4-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Split-half reliability of the scale has been reported to average .80. The scale assesses the degree to which the respondent is manipulative of others in interpersonal situations. Items on the scale are stated in the form of third person generalities. For example: Most people are basically good and kind. Higher scores indicate a greater manipulative tendency.

In addition to responding to each of the above two measures, each subject participating in the study completed a brief questionnaire that reported the subject's sex, age, academic rank, and a self-characterization of response style when responding to forced-choice items. Perceived response style indicated the degree (rarely or sometimes) to which subjects reported changing initial responses. All participants responded to the information questionnaire in the inventory booklet by circling their response choices. Sex and perceived response style served as independent variables in the data analysis. Age and academic rank information was gathered to insure the homogeneity of the sample across treatments. To investigate the question of the effects of response mode and format on the responses of the subjects, both the Phillips self-acceptance scale and the Christie MACH scale were placed together on one inventory, followed by the questionnaire. Response mode and format were then manipulated to produce seven forms as follows:

Out-of-Booklet Mode

Form 1. Subjects were directed to respond to the items on a separate, machine-scored answer sheet. The answer sheet was a standard IBM 509 response sheet, which was responded to by blackening the response choice on the sheet. Subjects were instructed to blacken A if they strongly agreed, B if they agreed, etc.

Form 2. Subjects were directed to respond on a separate answer sheet. The answer sheet was prepared by the investigators in a format in which the item numbers were listed along with the codes SA, A, D, SD, horizontally. Subjects were instructed to circle the appropriate code according to whether they strongly agreed, agreed, etc.

Form 3. Subjects were directed to respond on a separate answer sheet prepared by the investigators. Item numbers were listed followed by a blank line on which respondents were to specify their response by writing SA, A, D, SD depending upon their response choice of strongly agree, agree, etc.

In-Booklet Mode

Form 4. Following each item in the inventory booklet was a vertical listing of the 4 Likert characterizations (strongly agree, agree, etc.). Respondents were told to respond in the booklet by circling the number (1, 2, 3, 4) preceding each response alternative. In this way, this form had the appearance of the typical multiple-choice format.

Form 5. Under each item presented in the test booklet was a horizontal listing of the abbreviations SA, A, D, SD. Subjects were directed to respond to each item by circling their choice, according to whether they strongly agreed, agreed, etc.

Form 6. A blank was provided to the immediate left of each item in which respondents were directed to write the abbreviated code, SA, A, D, SD to signify their choice of strongly agree, agree, etc.

Form 7. To the right of each item was provided the abbreviated horizontal listing SA, A, D, SD. Subjects were instructed to circle the appropriate code depending on whether they strongly agreed, agreed, etc.

Thus, three of the forms utilized separate answer sheet modes (Forms 1, 2, 3), while the other four (Forms 4, 5, 6, 7) were responded to directly in the inventory booklet. The specific directions given to participants for each form are presented in Appendix A. For each of the seven response forms, an anonymity condition was manipulated. The non-anonymous condition for each form provided directions and a space on the instruction sheet for subjects to write their names. For the anonymous condition, no such directions or space for the name were given. All forms were prepared and distributed at random to participants in the study. In all, 212 subjects were tested, drawn from both graduate and undergraduate enrollees at a midwestern university. The number of subjects used in any one analysis varied depending

upon the completeness of the information provided by the respondent, with the minimum N being 207.

Two scoring procedures were used to derive the units of analysis for the study. First, for each subject the scale scores on the Phillips measure of self-acceptance and the MACH scale were computed. Then as an index of extreme response tendency, counts were made of the number of extreme choices (responses of strongly agree or strongly disagree) made by respondents to each of the two scales. Thus, for each subject there was available four dependent variables: total score on self-acceptance, total score on Machiavellianism, extreme response count on self-acceptance, and extreme response count on Machiavellianism.

Results

To investigate the basic research question a series of univariate factorial ANOVA's were employed. Independent variables were: in- versus out-of-booklet mode (2 levels); response format manipulated within in- and out-of-booklet responding (3 levels within the "in" condition, and 4 levels within the "out" condition); sex of the respondent; anonymity of the respondent (2 levels); and, response style of the participant (2 levels). Thus, response format was considered as nested within response mode with these variables crossed with all others. Given the number of participants (N = 212), it was decided to examine the four dependent variables with three factor, partially nested ANOVA's where response-mode and the nested variable, response format, were analyzed with each of the remaining independent variables separately. Thus a total of 12 partially nested ANOVA's were computed: Response mode by response format by sex, response mode by response format by anonyminity, and response mode by response format by response style for each of the four dependent variables.

While this approach presents two immediate methodological weaknesses

(repeated univariate analyses rather than an initial multivariate approach, and loss of information potentially available in higher-order interactions, i.e., using a five factor ANOVA) it was felt that this investigation should be considered exploratory, the result's of which require more detailed replication and study. Results are presented below based on the series of ANOVA's preformed. Because cell sizes were unequal and tended to be disproportional, the ANOVA's were computed using the least-square solutions.

Response mode by response format by response style

Cell means and the ANOVA source table for the analysis of self-acceptance total scores are given in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

For raw scores on self-acceptance only the main effect of response style was judged statistically significant ($p = .01$). Individuals who reported that they rarely, if ever, changed a response choice once they had made up their minds obtained higher self-acceptance scores than those individuals who reported a tendency to change choices in the process of responding to forced-choice items. While not statistically significant ($p = .15$), a consideration of cell means reported in Table 1 indicates a tendency for raw score means to be higher for subjects responding out-of-booklet than for those responding in-booklet.

Table 2 presents cell means and the nested ANOVA source table for the extreme count scores for self-acceptance.

Insert Table 2 here

When treating these data, the main effect of response mode was the only factor observed to result in a statistically significant effect ($p = .001$). The average number of extreme response choices was 5.01 for those responding

out-of-booklet, while the mean frequency for those responding in-booklet was 3.41. Thus those responding out-of-booklet evidenced a greater likelihood to make extreme response choices than those responding in-booklet.

Machiavellian raw scale scores and extreme count scores were analyzed using the same nested ANOVA model. Table 3 presents cell means and the source table for MACH scale raw scores.

Insert Table 3 here

Results of the ANOVA analysis on raw scores indicated that the response format by response style interaction was statistically significant ($p = .035$). No other tested effect was observed to differ from chance ($p > .05$). A consideration of the cell means presented in Table 3 fails to reveal a systematic pattern of the significant format by style interaction. Rather, this complex disordinal interaction suggests unique effects of the various format and style combinations on MACH scale raw scores.

Table 4 presents cell means and the ANOVA source table for the analysis of Machiavellian extreme count scores. This result parallels the one found for the analysis of MACH raw scores. The response format by response style interaction hypothesis was rejected ($p = .04$), while the remaining main and interaction effect hypotheses failed to be rejected ($p > .05$).

Insert Table 4 here

Extreme MACH score cell means for the format by style interaction illustrate the effect of subject and instrument characteristics on response tendencies. Clearly evidenced is a large variability among the means, that as the response format is altered, the response style of the subject differentially effects the frequency with which extreme choices are reported.

Response mode by response format by sex and anonymity

Treating each of the dependent variables within the partially nested ANOVA while introducing the independent variables sex and anonymity failed to identify any significant main or interaction effect with one exception. That was for the main effect of sex on MACH raw scores where males scored significantly higher than females having means of 42.23 and 40.79 respectively ($p < .05$). This supports what has been reported in the literature when this scale is used to assess manipulative tendencies. Aside from this finding, failure to observe other statistically significant effects in conjunction with the response mode and format dimensions suggests the relative independence of these independent measures.

Effects of response format on scale reliability

Internal consistency estimates of reliability computed as coefficient alpha were found for each of the response forms treated in the investigation. These data are reported in Table 5 for forms on each of the scales.

Insert Table 5 here

While the sample sizes per form are not particularly large, the reliabilities across forms do noticably vary. A pattern does not emerge from this data in so far as similarities across the two scales, nor does there appear to be anything of a systematic nature within a scale across forms. Thus it appears that as one varies the responding format this acts also to affect the scales' reliability but the exact effect on reliability will be a function of the particular format

Discussion

The study was undertaken to determine if the response mode utilized with affective measures would become a factor effecting scores. Specific responding formats were also manipulated and examined. These conditions,

both of which would be under the control of the test developer and/or researcher were considered in light of selected respondent characteristics.

Results of the investigation have indicated differential effects that appear to be a function of the particular instrument being used. When a self-acceptance measure was considered there was observed an increase in the number of extreme response choices made when respondents were asked to indicate their response choice out-of-booklet. A tendency for out-of-booklet respondents to achieve higher scale scores was also noted. It is interesting to note that the trait assessed by this scale is considered by many to be a personality characteristic.

The second measure employed tends more toward being an attitudinal measure. Results of the data analyses done on this measure indicated that scale raw scores as well as extreme response choices varied as a function of both the response format being used and the response style of the respondent. This finding in part supports the findings of previous investigators who observed changes in scores as the response format of the instrument was varied.

The present research indicates that differential effects of response mode and format on total scores and extreme response tendencies are a function of both subject and instrument characteristics. The failure of the previous research to find response mode effects when using cognitive instruments may not therefore be generalized to include affective assessment. Not only might affective instruments in general be more susceptible than cognitive instruments to differences in response mode and format, but also, as this study indicates, characteristics of the affective instruments themselves might mediate such effects. The finding of an interaction between a subject characteristic (perceived response style) and response mode format suggests that trait assessment could be confounded resulting in a loss of in-

strument validity. As a result of this investigation we would urge that users of affective measures exercise caution when deciding on response forms, especially if such response forms would differ from those used when the measure was developed. Beyond this concern, there needs to be further research that will investigate the effects of response mode and format on responses to affective measures.

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Table 1

Cell means, N's, and source table for analysis of self-acceptance raw scores[1]

1.A. Descriptive Statistics

Response-style	Response Mode / Response-Format (form)	Out-of-Booklet 1	2	3	In-Booklet 4	5	6	7	Total
stable		50.4	52.5	52.1	50.8	49.3	50.1	50.7	50.8
unstable		50.3	50.5	47.0	45.9	47.4	49.1	49.1	48.5
	Total	50.3	51.5	49.3	47.7	48.5	50.0	49.8	49.6

1.B. Source Table

Source	df	MS	F
Mode (M)	1	84.52	2.03
Form within Mode F(M)	5	26.52	.64
Style (S)	1	249.72	6.00*
MS	1	1.06	.03
SF(M)	5	35.52	.85
Error	193	41.66	

*p = .01

[1]Cell sample sizes are given below. Subjects per treatment remain constant throughout this analysis and thus are not repeated in Tables 2 through 4 following.

Cell Sizes

Response-style	Response Mode / Response-format (form)	Out-of-Booklet 1	2	3	In-Booklet 4	5	6	7
stable		10	14	14	12	17	16	12
unstable		20	14	17	19	13	12	17

Table 2

Cell means and source table for analysis of self-acceptance extreme count scores

1.A. Descriptive Statistics

Response-style	Response-Mode / Response-Format (form)	Out-of-Booklet			In-Booklet				Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
stable		5.2	5.1	5.9	3.5	2.9	4.5	4.7	4.5
unstable		6.1	3.9	3.6	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.8
	Total	5.8	4.5	4.7	3.0	3.0	3.9	3.8	4.1

1.B. Source Table

Source	df	MS	F
Mode (M)	1	107.95	10.59*
Form within Mode (F)	5	7.55	.74
Style (S)	1	36.69	3.60
MS	1	.01	.00
SF(M)	5	9.90	.97
Error	193	10.20	

*p = .001

Table 3

Cell means and source table for
analysis of MACH raw scores

1.A. Descriptive Statistics

Response-style	Response-Mode / Response-Format (form)	Out-of-Booklet 1	2	3	In-Booklet 4	5	6	7	Total
stable		43.1	39.6	40.7	41.2	41.0	40.1	42.9	41.1
unstable		40.5	40.9	44.8	44.3	39.2	41.3	41.0	41.8
	Total	41.3	40.3	42.9	43.1	40.2	40.6	41.8	41.5

1.B. Source Table

Source	df	MS	F
Mode (M)	1	2.80	.12
Form within Mode F(M)	5	43.34	1.81
Style (S)	1	14.05	.59
MS	1	8.06	.34
SF(M)	5	59.00	2.46*
Error	193	24.02	

*p = .035

Table 4

Cell means and source table for analysis of MATH extreme count scores

1.A. Descriptive Statistics

Response-style	Response-Mode / Response-Format (form)	Out-of-Booklet 1	2	3	In-Booklet 4	5	6	7	Total
stable		2.6	3.2	3.9	3.0	2.7	3.1	2.9	3.1
unstable		5.2	1.7	1.8	2.6	3.7	2.8	3.5	3.1
	Total	4.3	2.5	2.8	2.7	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.1

1.B. Source Table

Source	df	MS	F
Mode (M)	1	.12	.01
Form within Mode F(M)	5	6.53	.76
Style (S)	1	.09	.01
MS	1	4.18	.49
SF(M)	5	20.09	2.34*
Error	193	8.58	

*p = .04

Table 5

Sample size, standard deviations and internal consistency reliability estimates for scale raw scores

		Self-acceptance		Machiavellian	
Form	N	S	α	S	α
1	30	6.84	.82	5.45	.70
2	28	4.96	.71	5.01	.77
3	31	8.32	.90	5.34	.77
4	31	6.40	.88	5.47	.77
5	30	6.02	.85	4.65	.67
6	28	5.70	.79	3.70	.43
7	29	6.54	.85	4.77	.69

Appendix A

Directions to Participants for Responding to Each Form

The cover sheet for each questionnaire booklet had the following explanatory statement and directions typed at the top of the sheet:

> The attached questionnaire presents a series of statements about an individual's attitudes, behaviors, interests, and opinions. We would ask your cooperation by responding to each of these statements honestly and truthfully. As they represent questions about a person's attitudes and opinions, there are no right answers. As such we are interested in your own attitudes and thoughts. The purpose of this survey is to provide us with information that will permit a better understanding of group human behavior as it effects testing and testing practices. At no time will a specific individual's responses be considered. The confidentiality of your responses is assured.
>
> Directions
>
> The statements on the following pages are directed at characterizing individual attitudes, behaviors, and opinions.

The specific directions for each form followed this introduction. Those directions are given below:

Out-of-Booklet Forms

Form 1

Directions on Cover Sheet:

> Read each statement carefully, and then on the machine scored answer sheet provided:
>
> Mark A - if you strongly agree with the statement
>
> Mark B - if you agree with the statement
>
> Mark C - if you disagree with the statement
>
> Mark D - if you strongly disagree with the statement
>
> Remember to respond to all statements.

Form 2

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then on the separate answer sheet provided along side each statement position:

Circle SA if you strongly agree with the statement

Circle A if you agree with the statement

Circle D if you disagree with the statement

Circle SD if you strongly disagree with the statement

Remember to respond to all statements.

Form 3

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then on the separate answer sheet provided along side each statement position:

Write SA if you strongly agree with the statement

Write A if you agree with the statement

Write D if you disagree with the statement

Write SD if you strongly disagree with the statement

Remember to respond to all statements.

In-Booklet Forms

Form 4

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then in the questionnaire booklet circle your response.

Circle 1 if you strongly agree with the statement

Circle 2 if you agree with the statement

Circle 3 if you disagree with the statement

Circle 4 if you strongly agree with the statement

Remember to respond to all statements.

Form 5

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then in the questionnaire booklet:

Circle SA if you strongly agree with the statement

Circle A if you agree with the statement

Circle D if you disagree with the statement

Circle SD if you strongly disagree with the statement

Remember to respond to all items.

Form 6

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then in the space provided in the questionnaire booklet to the left of the statement:

Write SA if you strongly agree with the statement

Write A if you agree with the statement

Write D if you disagree with the statement

Write SD if you strongly disagree with the statement

Remember to respond to all statements.

Form 7

Directions on Cover Sheet:

Read each statement carefully, and then in the space provided in the questionnaire booklet to the right of the statement:

Circle SA if you strongly agree with the statement

Circle A if you agree with the statement

Circle D if you disagree with the statement

Circle SD if you strongly disagree with the statement

Remember to respond to all statements.